

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants' attorney thanks the Examiner for his comments and thoughtful analysis of the references. Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.111, reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested. Claims 20-39 are presented for the Examiner's consideration. Claim 25 has been amended to delete the redundant phrase "primary gaseous source." Claims 1-19 and 40-50 remain canceled.

By way of the Office Action mailed April 8, 2004, the Examiner has required a new title that is clearly indicative of the invention to which the claims are directed. Applicants adopt the Examiner's suggestion, and respectfully request that the Examiner amend the title to read PROCESS OF MAKING A NONWOVEN WEB.

By way of the Office Action mailed April 8, 2004, the Examiner has required correction to the abstract because in line 2 the phrase "are disclosed" is used. Also, the Examiner has pointed out that the abstract should generally fall into the range of 50 to 150 words. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner replace the current Abstract with the amended Abstract as detailed above.

By way of the Office Action mailed April 8, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1 – 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made and thus unpatentable over U.S. Patent Number 5,280,079 to Allen et al. in view of U.S. Patent Number 5,342,335 to Rhim. Applicants' attorney confirmed with the Examiner that claims 20-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103, rather than claims 1-20. This rejection is respectfully traversed to the extent that it may apply to the presently presented claims.

Allen et al. describe a method comprising (1) preparing an aqueous *ester* crosslinked ionic polymer solution, (2) shaping the solution into fibers, (3) drying the fibers, and (4) crosslinking the fiber to form water absorbent, water insoluble fibers (column 5, lines 1-68). Rhim describes a method comprising (1) preparing a *polyvinyl alcohol* polymer solution, (2) extruding the solution to

form a plurality of threadlines, (3) attenuating the threadlines, (4) drying the threadlines, and (5) depositing the fiber randomly to form a continuous nonwoven web.

In contrast, Applicants claim a method comprising (1) preparing an aqueous *amide* crosslinked ionic polymer solution, (2) extruding the solution to form a plurality of threadlines, (3) attenuating the threadlines, (4) drying the threadlines, (5) depositing the fiber randomly to form a continuous nonwoven web, and (6) crosslinking the nonwoven web. As set forth in the Examples, the amino functional group containing comonomer of Applicants' invention significantly reduces the heat curing temperature or the curing time required compared to other comonomers.

The combination of Allen et al. and Rhim fails to teach or suggest the use of an aqueous amide crosslinked ionic polymer. Moreover, since Allen et al. and Rhim do not appreciate the drawbacks of higher temperature or longer heat curing time (i.e., discoloration and odor generation), the combination of Allen et al. and Rhim does not suggest and the Examiner has failed to provide any reasoning why one skilled in the art would be motivated to make the changes necessary to arrive at the claimed invention. For at least these reasons, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection.

By way of the Office Action mailed April 8, 2004, the Examiner objected to the drawings because reference character "d₁" has been used to designate both the distance between die face 34 and plane 35 and the distance between die face 34 and plane 36. In amended FIG 3, "d₁" designates the distance between die face 34 and plane 35, and "d₂" designates the distance between die face 34 and plane 36. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this amended figure.

The Examiner has additionally objected to the drawings because all reference signs in FIG 5 are not mentioned in the description. Inclusion of FIG 5 was inadvertent and Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner delete FIG 5.

For the reasons stated above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently presented claims are in form for allowance.

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Amdt. dated : July 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of April 8, 2004

Please charge any prosecutorial fees which are due to Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. deposit account number 11-0875.

The undersigned may be reached at: 920-721-4405.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I, Judith M. Anderson, hereby certify that on July 8, 2004 this document is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

By: 

Judith M. Anderson

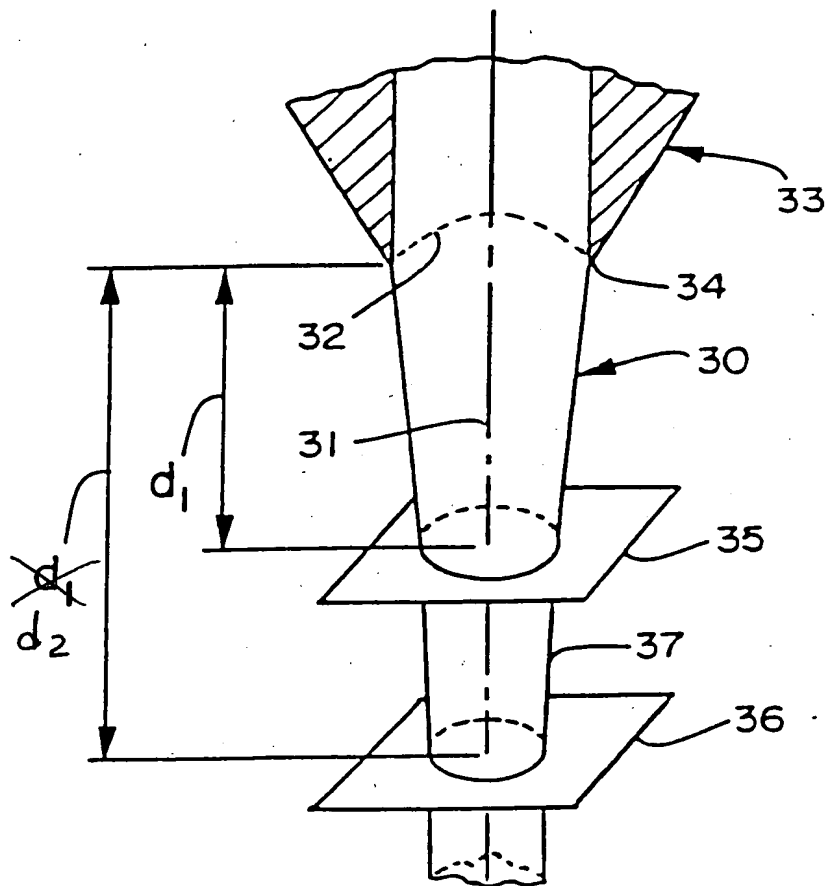


FIG. 3